

Executive Registry

173-522

29 January 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT : Returnee Interviews - Calendar Year 1972

1. This office interviewed [redacted] employees who had returned from overseas during 1972. They were distributed by the area in which they had served and their directorate as follows:

25X1A

DDP	DDS	DDI	DDS&T	TOTAL
[redacted]				

25X1A

Those from directorates other than Plans constitute 38% of the population interviewed. The groups from the Intelligence [redacted] and the Science and Technology [redacted] Directorates reflect their proportion of the returning personnel adequately. This is not the case, however, with the larger number [redacted] from the Support Directorate because [redacted] constitute an uncommonly large part of that directorate's foreign service personnel and they are frequently assigned directly to another station or come to Washington only briefly.

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2. The primary purpose of this interviewing program is to talk to employees, and to give them an opportunity to talk to us, about life overseas, particularly as it relates to their work, personnel practices affecting them, and their careers in the Agency. The interviews were informal and the results are not subject to any meaningful statistics. Nonetheless, the expressions of this body of returning personnel do give us a general understanding of their morale, and of the kinds of stimuli that drive them, as well as their opinions about individual situations here and there.

3. The caliber of this group of personnel appeared to be exceptionally good. Their discussion, supplemented by information in their files, indicated that most had performed well and had grown through their overseas experience, or at least not remained static. For the most part they seemed to grasp uncommonly well the complexities of management responsibilities and to be able to function more easily as a result. The few exceptions to the relatively high caliber of this group of returnees were nonetheless productive. A few had recognizable limitations in the sense that they had "peaked" at their current grade, or that jobs had to be fashioned to fit within their limitations. There were only a couple who appeared to lack some element necessary to succeed in the work they had chosen.

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4. The overall supervision of stations was endorsed so strongly that adverse criticism was all the more notable. Even those [REDACTED] stations which are chronically plagued with morale problems were described as being in reasonably healthy condition under the ministrations of good management. Among stations that were criticized, two were cited as having fundamental management problems affecting performance: one of these foreshadowed a problem for a forthcoming inspection in which the divisional headquarters was already engaged and which was subsequently resolved. The other was a historically rooted problem which had been addressed in a previous inspection and which seemed to yield only slowly to corrective measures from its headquarters. Three other stations were criticized for one or another general policy affecting morale: one had been addressed in a previous inspection and had been remedied to a significant extent; the other two foreshadowed problems for a forthcoming inspection which found they were both being treated in headquarters and that they were being resolved.

5. There were also a few returnees who considered that individual supervisors had not been adequate in one respect or another with varying adverse consequences upon morale, performance, or individual opportunity to advance. These few negative criticisms, however, were heavily outnumbered by the many who volunteered solid praise for the productive direction and encouragement they had received from their immediate supervisors.

6. Morale is probably related, in the ultimate sense, directly to advancement. In this respect, most returnees discussed the progress of their work in breadth and depth, and their hopes for career advancement. Some, not surprisingly, expressed the belief that they should be in a higher grade, or spoke of their concern that a justified promotion might not materialize. But this focus seemed much diminished from previous years and most people addressed themselves to those factors which would put them in position for promotions. They were concerned to get the experience, training, and assignments through which to advance and, more specifically, to claim substantively more interesting and challenging jobs. The same drive to more advanced and absorbing jobs was expressed by non-professionals, i.e., clericals, secretaries, and assistants of all types who wanted at least semi-professional or minor management positions.

7. Overall, morale in terms of this kind of advancement was good; the preponderant number expressed satisfaction in their current status and in their expectations. Most returnees clearly felt that their tours had been rewarding and that they had grown professionally. Among the non-professionals, some had had more rewarding tasks than were available to them at headquarters, and a number of these had found the opportunity to break through into better jobs.

8. There were, however, expressions about more general obstacles to career advancement. While these added little that was new to the subject, the fact that the often low-key criticism continues about career management must be noted. Some complaints were individual in nature, such as the senior officer who was assigned to a "real no-nothing job" by the station; while this

is serious, it belongs in another context and not in the area of overall career management which is the subject here. In Agency-wide terms, some expressed the feeling that there should be more mobility among directorates. A senior [redacted] officer, for example, felt some interchange with the DDP would be productive for all. Personnel from [redacted], who had had their first opportunity to serve in the field, felt the limitations of their own offices more keenly and were discouraged at prospects of being able to move out to less confining work. Within the Plans Directorate, operations officers spoke of the concern they often feel in the middle of a tour about their next assignment. There is some feeling that the management of career planning could be much better, from the individual's point of view at least. In non-professional occupations, while a few did break through barriers to perhaps semi-professional work as a result of their field assignments, there is a general belief that there is no adequate procedure for advancing in these ranks. One college graduate secretary-intelligence assistant was "dismayed at the (lack of) career possibility in the CS"; and another said that she was transferring to another division on return from overseas because it had promised to assist her to qualify for a professional job.

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9. On the whole returnees found living arrangements and personal administrative support to be satisfactory in all areas. With only minor exceptions or qualifications, they reported that housing, medical services, educational facilities, moving arrangements and the like were good and some times very good. By and large they felt that they and their families were taken care of within reasonable expectations.

10. Returnees from Saigon, which has been an unusual situation for many over the past several years, fitted into the general pattern of returnees this year. They seemed to have few unique difficulties or even experiences to differentiate them significantly from the rest of the returnees who were interviewed.

11. While the interview program is not intended to be an action program, inspectors did advise or assist returnees in a dozen or more cases. In a few instances, the IG made suggestions to individual components about procedures or policies. But the more general use of information gained from the interviews is supplementary to the regular concerns of the office.

William V. Broe
Inspector General

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Returnee Interviews - Calendar Year 1972

FROM:

Inspector General

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

29 January 1973

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. Executive Director-
Comptroller

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IG -

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DD's ? -

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